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BRIEF NOTES

India and Elam

Indologists are aware that when Gautama Buddha lived and preached, Bimbisāra ruled in Magadha. Five Purāṇas, incorporating a dynastic account of the post-Mahābhārata period, namely, Matsya, Vāyu, Brahmāṇḍa, Viṣṇu, and Bhāgavata, agree in pointing to one Śiśunāka or Śiśunāga as the founder of the dynasty to which Bimbisāra belonged.¹ It is true that the Ceylon chronicles place Śiśunāka (whom they call Susunāga) six generations *later* than Bimbisāra.² But Purāṇic authority is, in this matter, more to be relied upon than confused recollections conjured up in chronicles of distant Ceylon.

The Purāṇas posit three kings between Śiśunāka and Bimbisāra. The Matsya counts 154 years from the accession of Śiśunāka to the termination of Bimbisāra's reign. The Vāyu reckons the interval between the same two events as one of 164 years, while the Brahmāṇḍa's total is 174 years.³ Copyists' mistakes are probably responsible for this divergence, the '26' and '28' years assigned respectively to Kākavarṇiṇ and Bimbisāra in the Matsya's original being misread as '36' and '38',—a common enough blunder, occasioned by the similarity between *va* and *tra* which was likely to make *ṣadvimśat* and *aṣṭāvimśat* appear *ṣaṭtrīṃśat* and *aṣṭātrīṃśat*.⁴ The Matsya total, 154 years, should be preferred to the bigger totals given in the Vāyu and the Brahmāṇḍa, since the Matsya contains the oldest version of the dynastic account.⁵

According to Ceylonese tradition, towards which Western scholars, sceptical at first, are gradually assuming an attitude

¹ Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age* (Oxford, 1913), p. 21.

² *Dīpavamsa*, ch. V; *Mahāvamsa*, ch. IV.

³ Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

of faith, Buddha died in the 8th year of Ajātaśatru, successor to Bimbisāra, that year corresponding to 544 B. C.⁶ Northern tradition represents Buddha to have died in the 5th year of Ajātaśatru.⁷ Bimbisāra's last year is thus placed 551 or 548 B. C., and Śiśunāka's accession, being (according to the Matsya Purāṇa) 154 years earlier, falls in the year 705 or 702 B. C.

To Assyriologists the name *Śiśunāka*, *Śiśunāga* or *Susunāga* inevitably recalls the designation *Susinak* or *Susunqa* adopted in those days and earlier still by native kings of Susa (Elam).⁸ *Śiśunāka*, if taken as a Sanskrit compound made up of *śiśu* and *nāka*, would mean nothing; and we know that Indian kings of that period, choosing to adopt Sanskritic names, usually selected names with a meaning. In a commentary on the Ceylon chronicle, the Mahāvamsa, we find a traditional account of the name *Susunāga*.⁹ It is clear from this account, though we need not believe every word of it, that tradition, too, failed to connect the first element *susu* with Sanskrit *śiśu*. *Susinak* of Elam could be easily transformed into *Śiśunāka* by metathesis of the first two syllables, and the transformation would come in handy to an Indian *purāṇakāra* naturally disposed to look out for Sanskritic names. The Ceylon form *Susunāga* is nearer still to the Elamite *Susunqa*.

Susinak or *Susunqa* means 'the Susian'. Could a *Susinak* have come to rule over Magadha about 700 B. C.? No very close examination of the history of Elam is required for a satisfactory answer to this very relevant question. After 720 B. C. when Sargon of Assyria carried out a campaign against Elam, the latter country adopted the policy of helping Babylonia against Assyria. About 704 B. C. the combined forces of Elam and Babylonia were overthrown at Kis. Elam now set herself on a war of revenge. She formed a confederacy, embracing numerous neighboring states, to humble Assyria; but that confederacy was broken by Sennacherib in a battle at Khaluli (691 B. C.).¹⁰ Is it not likely that India was included by the

⁶ Mahāvamsa, ch. II; Smith, *Oxford History of India* (1919), p. 52. The date 544 B. C. is deduced from data in *Dīpavamsa* and *Mahāvamsa*.

⁷ Rockhill, *Life of the Buddha*, p. 91.

⁸ Sayce, *Records of the Past*, N. S., vol. V, p. 148.

⁹ Turnour, *Mahawanso* (1837), p. xxxvii.

¹⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th ed.), article 'Elam'.

Elamite king in this quest of alliance? The territorial limits of Elam are given differently by different classical authors, but some writers define the country as 'lying between the Oroatis and the Tigris, and stretching from India to the Persian Gulf.'¹¹ Could India be left out, as at any rate a potential ally, by Elam in her life-and-death struggle with Assyria? An Elamite prince of the blood royal, a Susinak, would be the most suitable person to be entrusted with a mission to India. The mission could readily secure hospitality in an Indian Court, and there is nothing strange in the Susinak afterwards carving out a kingdom for himself within the borders of India. Benares, for instance, would form a most convenient centre of political intrigue. The Purāṇic account indicates, in fact, that Śiśunāka, placing his son on the throne of Benares, 'proceeded towards' (*śrayiṣyati*) or 'started an expedition against' (*saṁyāsyati*) Girivraja, the capital of Magadha;¹² and he may have begun his career here as a minister, as the Mahāvamsa asserts.¹³ The Purāṇas further emphasize that the descendants of Śiśunāka were *kṣatrabandhavaḥ*.¹⁴ The term *rājanyabandhu*, a synonym of *kṣatrabandhu*, is used in early Indian literature to denote a *rājanya* or 'a prince', but usually with a depreciating sense.¹⁵ In later literature, however, *e. g.*, in the Mānava Dharmaśāstra, the terms *kṣatra*, *kṣatrabandhu*, *rājanya* and *rājanyabandhu* are used without discrimination.¹⁶ How did the elevation in meaning of the terms *kṣatrabandhu* and *rājanyabandhu* come about? The answer, I think, is pretty simple. These compounds originally meant, in all probability, 'kinsman of a prince', *i. e.* of a prince native to India. Foreign invaders of a princely origin, even upstart adventurers who rise from the ranks, usually attempt, and succeed in their attempt, to effect matrimonial alliances with ruling dynasties of established dignity. They would not be generally acknowledged as *kṣatriyāḥ* or *rājanyāḥ* at first, and would be designated *kṣatrabandhavaḥ* or *rājanyabandhavaḥ*. Gradually, however, the distinction would

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

¹³ *Mahāvamsa*, ch. IV.

¹⁴ Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

¹⁵ Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, *sub voce* 'Rājanyabandhu'.

¹⁶ Cf. Manu, V. 320 and II. 38, 49, 65, with one another.

disappear, and the descendants of a *kṣatrabandhu* would come to be regarded as *kṣatriyāḥ* themselves. In the Mānava Dharmaśāstra the distinction could hardly be observed, since its ethnic outlook on Kṣatriyas was so broad that Śakas, Yavanas, Pahlavas, and even Cīnas, were held by its author to have been Kṣatriyas by race, who had been rendered outcast only by long abstention from Brahminical ways of life and protracted separation from Brahmins.¹⁷ If, therefore, Śiśunāka was originally an Elamite prince who afterwards made himself master of Magadha, he would, in the plenitude of his power, naturally seek the hand of an Indian princess of a Kṣatriya house; and his descendants could very properly be designated *kṣatrabandhavaḥ* in early Sanskrit records. That some of his descendants intermarried with well-established indigenous dynasties is known from literary evidence. Thus, Bimbisāra is stated to have married a sister of Prasajit of the Ikṣvāku dynasty,¹⁸ and Udayana of Kauśāmbī is represented as having taken to wife a sister of Darśaka, grandson of Bimbisāra.¹⁹

Our finding throws some light on the fact, long familiar to the scholarly world, that brisk trade began between India and Babylonia about 700 B. C.²⁰ With the advent of an Elamite dynasty into Magadha, commerce would be fostered between India and Babylonia, Elamite policy being at that time pro-Babylonian. We are also able to understand the presence of so-called Assyrian, but really Babylonian, elements in early Indian art. Babylonian influence, traced in other spheres of Indian cultural activity, receives, too, an intelligible explanation.

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The Name and Nature of the Sumerian God Uttu

JAOS 40, 73 f. the writer discussed the character of the Sumerian god Uttu (*TAG-KU*) and proposed to consider him as the god of commerce and the arts of civilization. Originally,

¹⁷ Manu, X. 44.

¹⁸ Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 3.

¹⁹ Bhāsa, *Svapnavāsavadattā*, Act I.

²⁰ Rhys Davids, *op. cit.*, p. 115.